

MASSACHUSETTS—WOOL GROWERS OF BERKSHIRE.

MEMORIAL

OF THE

WOOL GROWERS AND MANUFACTURERS

OF

BERKSHIRE, STATE OF MASSACHUSETTS.

DECEMBER 31, 1827.

Referred to the Committee on Manufactures.

WASHINGTON :

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1828.

MENTION OF WOOL GROWERS

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MEETING OF WOOL GROWERS.

At a meeting of the wool growers and manufacturers of the county of Berkshire, convened in pursuance of an extensive and general notice, through the medium of the public papers, held at Pittsfield, on the 12th instant, Hon. Henry Shaw was called to the chair, and Thomas B. Strong, Esq. appointed Secretary.

Resolved, That, whereas the interest of the grower and manufacturer of wool are alike in a ruinous situation, beyond our means to retrieve, and only within the power of our Government to redress; and as the only way the American citizen can claim the attention of his Government is by petition :

Therefore, Resolved, That the Chairman and Secretary, together with Henry Marsh, Esq. be a committee to report to this meeting a memorial to Congress, exhibiting our grievances, and claiming their protection.

Whereupon, the meeting adjourned, and the following memorial was reported, and unanimously approved by the meeting, held after adjournment, and by them directed to be signed by the Chairman and Secretary, and be transmitted to the Representative of this district in Congress, requesting him to present it to that honorable body:

To the honorable the Senate and House of Representatives in Congress assembled :

The memorial of the wool growers and manufacturers of the county of Berkshire, in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts,

RESPECTFULLY REPRESENTS :

That they are extensively engaged in the growing and manufacturing of wool. To these enterprises we have been invited, not more by the local advantages of our county, than by the professions of encouragement and protection disclosed by the policy of our Government, from its establishment to the present day. And if we have not realized all that our actual wants demanded, we have never doubted that the same spirit which laid the foundation of our independence in '76, would continue to exert its influence until all the great branches of national industry should become so firmly established as not to be endangered or ruined by foreign competition. The laws devised for the double purpose of revenue and protection to domestic industry, have held to us the cheering language of encouragement; and, under the pledge thus given, our confidence was established, our capital invested, and our exertions have been untiring. But we will not conceal the fact, however flattering to our rivals, that foreign policy and

legislation, in effect repealing or annulling the laws of an American Congress, has left your memorialists to struggle in a competition destructive of our capital, and fatal to our hopes. To the late Congress we sent up our petition for redress. It went the way of all that vast mass of memorials from our fellow sufferers. Petition is the only form by which the People can address the Government of our country. We looked with confidence to your predecessors: we saw, with delight, the exertions of our friends—with anxiety, the mistaken policy of our adversaries. And if, in that protracted struggle, our hopes were deferred, and your interests were suffered still further to languish and decay, still it was consoling to witness the public sympathy and the public sentiment generally and forcibly expressed in favor of our neglected and suffering interests.

Your memorialists consider the protection of their interests as a measure of public policy, demanded alike by a just regard to the present character and future glory of the nation. We therefore forbear the obtrusion of our personal wants, persuaded that considerations of a higher nature must control our destiny. We would respectfully refer your honorable body to the resolutions passed, and to the facts collected and presented by the Convention of Harrisburg, in the full belief that they are entitled to the confidence and attention of Congress. To the spirit of the Constitution, to the enlightened patriotism of an American Congress, we appeal; and we confidently trust that no sectional views, no political aims, no jealous suspicions, will intrude their selfish or distrustful counsels, to prevent the adoption of the most liberal and efficient protection to the great branches of American industry. In a Confederacy like ours, the adoption of measures designed to harmonize different interests must result from compromise; and, whilst we ask for liberality in the measures designed for the protection and advancement of our interests, we as cheerfully invoke the same spirit in behalf of the interests of others. Your memorialists respectfully suggest to your honorable body a modification in the revenue laws to the following effect:

1st. A square yard duty on imported woollens, graduated upon minimum prices. 2d. A repeal of the law allowing credits for duties on imported wools and woollen goods. 3d. An auction duty on all imported wools and woollen goods sold at auction. 4th. A specific duty on all imported wool. 5th. A modification of the laws appointing appraisers, in such form as that the value of all cloths and wools imported shall be fixed by appraisement, in the port or place at which they are landed.

Your memorialists beg leave to remark, that, in regard to the square yard duty, as found by experience in cottons, no more efficient mode of protection could be devised. The necessity of the credit system having long since passed away, the system itself should no longer remain: for what was once designed to benefit the enterprise and supply the want of capital to American merchants, is now mainly used by the foreign merchant and manufacturer as an auxiliary to his plans for the advancement of their interests to the destruction of our own.

A further serious grievance to your memorialists, and the most ruinous to the fair commercial operations of the country, is the auction system, as now employed. We are persuaded that, by correcting this existing system, Congress can most efficiently aid both the fair American merchant and manufacturer. The auction system, aided by the credits afforded at the Customhouse, enables the foreigner to dispense with capital, and to avoid almost all the risks we are obliged to encounter. Your memorialists respectfully invite the attention of your honorable body particularly to this point. But we will press upon your honorable body no farther than respectfully to assure you of our confidence in your wisdom and patriotism.

HENRY SHAW, *Chairman.*

THOMAS B. STRONG, *Secretary.*

